

A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE

By George F. Seymour Copyright, 1901, by George F. Seymour

------Late in the spring of 1864, on the old Nashville and Chattanooga railroad. which had been taken possession of by the military authorities, I was doing "apere" work, which meant that some

the would run a shifter in the yard award thaps the next thing would take and train out over the road. Ave didn't have very much in the way reiling stock at that time, as the Jesunies" had run most of it away when they evacuated Nashville, and we were particularly short of good engines. One day I was sent out with an extra train and told to pull it down to Chattanooga with the shifter. This had been in its day a first class engine, but it was very old and had been patched and doctored up for use in the yard. We had a squad of soldlers for a guard, and orders had been given for every-

thing to keep out of our way.

Several changes had been made on the read since I had been out, but the only one having anything to do with this story was with regard to a siding atest twe-thirds of the way down. This was a spur some thousand feet or se is length, running into a gravel pit. There was quite a gully between the main track and the pit, and the siding ren for some distance over a trestle. Some of the rails had been taken up and used to lengthen out another spur track farther down the road. The switch stand had been removed and the switch spiked fast.

We stopped at a water tank just this side of Stevenson. Here the lieutenant in charge said be had a wounded guerrilla, and, as he didn't know what to de with him, we would have to take him to Chattanooga with us. So he was carried into the conductor's car, at the rear of the train, and laid on the floor. It was now well along toward evening and growing dark very rapidly. more so than usual, as a thunderstorm was coming up. Before long it was upon us, and it was a terror. I rolled the

on this part of the road we were mak-

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and has been made under his per-

Hartford Republican. ing tolerably good time. About three quarters of an hour after passing Stevenson the gong gave the signal. Never, before or since, did



send such a thrill through me. Before the sound of the bell had been swa! lowed up in the roar of the storm I had whistled for the brakes and reversed the engine. I knew that this would be of little avail for the rails were slinpery as glass, the train was heavy and we were running down an eighty foot grade. Just then I chanced to loo! back and saw Tom Gage, the conducor, climbing over the rear end of the tender. A moment later he was in the cab, and his face was as white as a sheet. He shouted in my ear:

"How far are we from the old grave pit siding? Tell me, quick!" The freman had come over to my side of the cab, and I mottoned to him to answer the question. "A little more

"Why?" Tom repeated in a shout. "We're all of us going inte the ditch; that's why! That guerrilla chap has just come to his senses, and he says his gang pulled out the spikes and then and let you over?" threw the switch, so as to open the side track, and that a whole lot of the gang are waiting there for us now. I'm go ing to climb down before we get there. So goodby, beys!" And, jumping to the side, he disappeared.
"Jump, Jim!" I cried to my fireman.

"I'm going to stick here and take my chances, but you needn't!" He looked at me steadily for a second shook his head and turned to his own side of the cab. Our speed had new slackened, but not sufficiently to offer stop before reaching the fatal siding.

And I remember now that I fell to ealculating how long it would probably be until we struck the switch. I noticed that we seemed to be running into the heart of the storm. The lightning was And now we were in the cut-fust

beyond it was the siding-and I knew that within the next three minutes the story would be told, for we were still running at a fair pace. As we came out of the cut the siding was in plain sight in the lightning, and I saw in moment that the wounded man had old eagine along for all she was worth, told the truth, for the switch had been and as there was a pretty stiff grade thrown over and no earthly power

ould save us from turning of to the left, passing over three or four sections of the trestle, and then, when we reached the end of the rails, pitching twenty-five or thirty feet down into

the ravine. eyes toward the other ade of the track, and there I saw a group of mea, ten or a dozen of them, all armed, creuching at the foet of the embankment. At the sight all my calmness took flight. I forgot all about the danger we were in. Drawing my revolver I emptied it into the midst of the group and had the satisfaction of seeing two of them tumble over. Then I threw the lever forward and pulled the throttle wide open, for now I was anxious to have the thing over with, and the end, whatever it might be, reached at once.

The train jumped ahead, and we were almost on the switch when I saw a bolt of lightning coming directly toward us. I say I saw it. I did see it, and that is all I know. The concussion that followed made the old engine rattle in every joint and almost joited me from the cab.

When, a moment later, the realization of our position returned to me, I saw that the engine had passed ever the switch. A minute later and the entire train was across, and then I knew that by some means which I could not understand we had escaped the tran that had been laid for us. A moment before we had reached it I had seen the open switch as distinctly as I ever saw anything in my life, and yet we passed over it in safety.

It was like a miracle. We pulled into Chattaneoga about midnight. The assistant superintendent happened to be there, and early the next morning he sent for me.
"You seem to be the only man likely

to give me a clear account of your last night's experience," be said. And when I had given it he added sharply, "You are certain you saw the open switch?" "Yes, sir," I replied; "perfectly sure

Then he turned to me suddenly and said: "What was it that elesed the switch

"That's more than I can say," I re-

would have gone out over the siding and then down into the gully." "No doubt of that," he said; "none whatever. And you mentioned something about an unusually sharp dash of lightning which came at about this time." He paused significantly, then added: "Well, I want you to keep this matter entirely to yourself. Take the first train going out, make a thorough examination of the switch and find out, the slightest hope of our coming to a | if you can, what closed it so suddenly. The next train coming this way will pick you up, and as soon as you arrive

here report to me." The assistant superintendent's suggestion about the lightning kept my brain busy during the trip. Could that flash have been the agency whereby we were turned from certain doom into the path of safety? I got the answer as soon as I arrived at the scene of our adventure and examined the switch. Not only had the switch been closed by being thrown violently into place, but the parts where they came together had been fused and welded by heaven's fires into a mass so solid as to prevent the switch from ever being opened

Some may say it was nothing more than chance, others will call it good luck, but I never think of it without realizing that the bolt which struck the switch and forced it back into place came straight from him who "holds the

lightning in his bands."

Mistaken Bounty. Shertly after George De Forest Brush, the well known painter, had sold a \$7,000 picture Mrs. Brush, whose delicate, spirituelle face and old fashioned gowns are familiar to the public through her husband's canvases, was loitering one afternoon along Fifth avenue with her children. At an art store window the little group tarried. While gazing at the pictures a woman of distinguished presence and fashion able attire came out of the store. Is passing to her earriage the beauty of one of the Brush children attracted her attention. Calling the lad to her, she gave him some pennies. Then, meet ing the wan, spirituelle face of the mother, the same face that shines out from that painted canvas "Mother and Child," awarded in Paris the gold medal and now the property of the Boston museum, the Lady Bountiful said solicitously, "My good woman, does your husband have plenty of work?" "Oh, yes, thank you," said Mrs. Brush humbly. "He is quite busy painting." The carriage door closed upon the beneficent hdy, who went me doubtlessly inwardly patting herself for having shown sympathy for a poor house painter's wife.-New York Press.

An Old Enemy. Persons who rise in the world are not always as frank about their former place in life as good sense and humor might lead them to be. Dean Hole is his book of reminiscences, "Now and Then," tells a little story of one whose humor did not desert him in time of

prosperity. A footman who had begun life as a doctor's boy grew interested in the study of medicine and spent his leisure hours reading medical books. He came to the United States, worked hard as a student and as a physician for many years and attained a large practice. After some years of absence he re-turned to England. Seated one day at luncheon with those whom he had formerly served, he suddenly astonished the company by holding up the mus-tard pot and addressing it with, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

Afterward he explained that the only reproof he had incurred from the lady who was then at the head of the table was evoked by the neglected condition of the mustard pot .- Youth's Compan

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August 29, November 5. J. A. Hicks. Buford—February 20, May 1, August 1, November 6. W. A. Rone, Centertown—February 16, May 12 August 25, November 3. D. J. Wilcox, Rockport-February 8, May 10,

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